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Number: 22

Date: May 7, 2008

Public Hearing to Focus on Draft Recommendations of California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care

Focus on How Courts and Child Welfare Partners Can Better Serve Youth and Families in Foster Care

The California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care is holding public hearings on its draft recommendations for improving foster care outcomes. Appointed in 2006 by the Chief Justice, the commission was given two years to identify ways for courts and their child welfare partners to better serve children and families in foster care

Dependency courts have oversight for the safety and well-being of approximately 80,000 children in California's foster care system. Decisions made in the courtroom have profound and lasting effects on children and families, including where a child will live and with whom.

The state's dependency courts currently wrestle with overwhelming caseloads, crowded dockets and inadequate information. Hearings average only 5-10 minutes, and children and parents do not routinely have a voice in court.

The commission's draft recommendations focus on: prevention and permanency, court reforms, collaboration between the courts and other agencies, and funding.

What: A public hearing on recommendations for foster care reform

**Who: Foster youth, parents and caregivers;
Dependency court judges and attorneys, including Judge Margaret Henry, LA County Superior Court;
Child welfare administrators, including representatives from LA County Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS);
Dr. David Sanders, former director of DCFS and current Vice President of Casey Family Programs**

When: Monday, May 12, 2008, 10 am – 3 pm

Where: Ronald Reagan Building, Auditorium, 300 South Spring, LA

Advance interviews can be arranged with those who will be testifying.